UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/50/183
6 March 1996

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 112 (b)

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/50/635/Add.2)]

50/183. Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance

The General Assembly,

Recalling that all States have pledged themselves, under the Charter of the United Nations, to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Emphasizing that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is far-reaching and profound and that it encompasses freedom of thought on all matters, personal conviction and the commitment to religion or belief, whether manifested individually or in community with others,

Recalling article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1/

Reaffirming that discrimination against human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter,

Reaffirming its resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, by which it proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

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1/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

Reaffirming the call of the World Conference on Human Rights for all Governments to take all appropriate measures in compliance with their international obligations and with due regard to their respective legal systems to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief, including practices of discrimination against women and the desecration of religious sites, recognizing that every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, expression and religion, 2/

Recalling that the World Conference on Human Rights recognized that the process of promoting and protecting human rights should be conducted in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law, 3/

Calling upon all Governments to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on religious intolerance to enable him to carry out his mandate fully,

Recognizing that it is desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and that both Governments and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in this domain,

Emphasizing that non-governmental organizations and religious bodies and groups at every level have an important role to play in the promotion of tolerance and the protection of freedom of religion or belief,

Conscious of the importance of education in ensuring tolerance of religion and belief,

Welcoming the inclusion of events relating to tolerance and religious diversity among the activities undertaken during the United Nations Year for Tolerance,

Alarmed that serious instances of intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, including acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious extremism, occur in many parts of the world and threaten the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Deeply concerned that, as reported by the Special Rapporteur, the rights violated on religious grounds include the right to life, the right to physical integrity and to liberty and security of person, the right to freedom of expression, the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right not to be arbitrarily arrested or detained,

Believing that further efforts are therefore required to promote and protect the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and to eliminate all forms of hatred, intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief,

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2/ See A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, sect. II, para. 22.

3/ Ibid., sect. I, para. 7.

1. Reaffirms that freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is a human right derived from the inherent dignity of the human person and guaranteed to all without discrimination;

2. Urges States to ensure that their constitutional and legal systems provide adequate and effective guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief to all without discrimination, including the provision of effective remedies in cases where the right to freedom of religion or belief is violated;

3. Also urges States to ensure, in particular, that no one within their jurisdiction is, because of their religion or belief, deprived of the right to life or the right to liberty and security of person, or is subjected to torture or arbitrary arrest or detention;

4. Condemns all instances of hatred, intolerance and acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious extremism and intolerance of religion or belief;

5. Urges States, in conformity with international standards of human rights, to take all necessary action to prevent such instances, to take all appropriate measures to combat hatred, intolerance and acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious extremism and to encourage understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief;

6. Recognizes that legislation alone is not enough to prevent violations of human rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief;

7. Emphasizes that, as underlined by the Human Rights Committee, restrictions on the freedom to manifest religion or belief are permitted only if limitations are prescribed by law, are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, and are applied in a manner that does not vitiate the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

8. Urges States to ensure that, in the course of their official duties, members of law enforcement bodies, civil servants, educators and other public officials respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate against persons professing other religions or beliefs;

9. Calls upon all States to recognize, as provided in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the right of all persons to worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for those purposes;

10. Expresses its grave concern at any attack upon religious places, sites and shrines, and calls upon all States, in accordance with their national legislation and in conformity with international human rights standards, to exert utmost efforts to ensure that such places, sites and shrines are fully respected and protected;

11. Recognizes that the exercise of tolerance and non-discrimination by persons and groups is necessary for the full realization of the aims of the Declaration;

12. Considers it desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to this end, including the dissemination, as a matter of high priority, of the text of the Declaration by United Nations information centres, as well as by other interested bodies;

13. Encourages the continued efforts on the part of the Special Rapporteur appointed to examine incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world that are incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration and to recommend remedial measures as appropriate;

14. Invites the Special Rapporteur, within the terms of his mandate and in the context of recommending remedial measures, to take into account the experiences of various States as to which measures are most effective in promoting freedom of religion and belief and countering all forms of intolerance;

15. Encourages Governments to give serious consideration to inviting the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries so as to enable him to fulfil his mandate even more effectively;

16. Recommends that the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief be given appropriate priority in the work of the United Nations programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, including with regard to the drafting of legal texts in conformity with international instruments on human rights and taking into account the provisions of the Declaration;

17. Welcomes and encourages the efforts of non-governmental organizations to promote the implementation of the Declaration, and invites them to consider what further contribution they could make to its implementation and dissemination in all parts of the world;

18. Requests the Commission on Human Rights to continue its consideration of measures to implement the Declaration;

19. Requests the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session;

20. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Rapporteur receives the necessary staffing and financial and material resources to enable him to discharge his mandate;

21. Decides to consider the question of the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance at its fifty-first session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

99th plenary meeting
22 December 1995